

# Management Succession and Survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between management succession and survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured, self-administered questionnaire. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was 815 non-academic staff in the 4 Public Universities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. A sample of 268 respondents was calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between management succession and survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State. The study concludes that management succession positively influences the survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State. This implies that effective management succession planning is crucial for ensuring the smooth continuity of leadership and the preservation of institutional stability. When leadership transitions are well-managed and carefully executed, it can lead to improved governance, strategic decision-making, and overall organizational performance. The study recommends that public universities in Bayelsa State should establish a well-defined succession planning strategy that identifies potential successors, assesses their skills and competencies, and provides appropriate training and development opportunities.

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**KEYWORDS:** Management Succession, Survival, Adaptability, Proactiveness, Public Universities

## INTRODUCTION

Management succession planning is crucial for the success and continuity of an organization. According to Appelbaum et al. (2012), it is essential for organizations to have a concrete plan for the succession of key management positions. This is because the loss of key management personnel can have a detrimental impact on the organization's operations, profitability, and overall success. Management succession planning helps organizations to identify and develop potential leaders who can take up key positions in the future. This process involves identifying the skills, experiences and leadership qualities required for each position and then developing and training potential successors. The implementation of a management succession plan ensures a smooth transition of leadership and

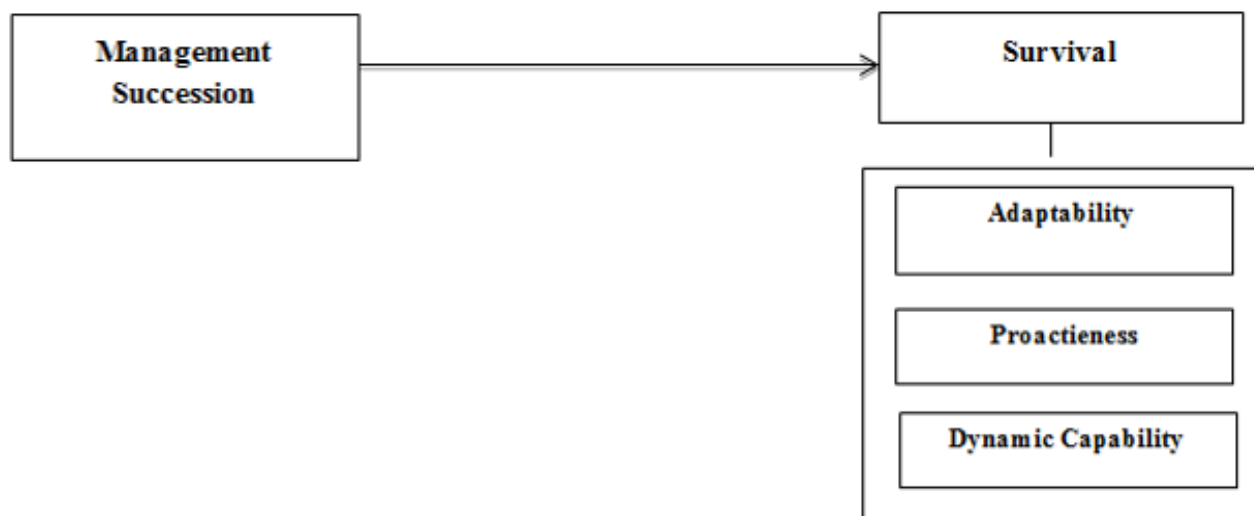
minimizes the negative impact that can result from the loss of key personnel. Furthermore, management succession planning promotes organizational stability and sustainability by ensuring that the organization has a pipeline of competent leaders who can drive the organization forward.

Succession planning is essential for business survival, but it is often overlooked by entrepreneurs who are focused on the day-to-day operations of their firms. According to Le Breton-Miller, Miller (2004), "succession planning is the process of identifying and developing employees who have the potential to fill key leadership positions within an organization." One strategy for ensuring business survival through succession is to develop a leadership pipeline. This

involves identifying and grooming potential successors at all levels of the organization, not just at the top. By doing so, the company ensures that it has a pool of qualified candidates to choose from when it comes time to fill key positions. Another strategy is to create a culture of continuous learning and development. This involves providing employees with opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge through training, mentoring, and coaching. By investing in their employees' development, companies can increase the likelihood that they will have a strong pool of internal candidates for key positions. Finally, it is important to have a clear and well-communicated succession plan in place. This plan should outline the process for

identifying and selecting successors, as well as the timeline for transitions. By having a clear plan in place, companies can ensure a smooth transition of leadership and minimize disruptions to operations. Overall, these strategies can help ensure business survival through succession by building a strong pipeline of talent, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and having a clear plan in place for leadership transitions. (Le Breton-Miller, Miller, 2004).

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between management succession and survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State. The conceptual framework is shown below:



**Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between management succession and survival**

Source: Desk Research (2023)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### Resource-Based Theory

The first Resource-Based publication in the area of strategic management discovered as such was by (Wernerfelt, 1984). A theory of competitive advantage was cultivated through the effort of Wernerfelt in line with the resources of a firm. It was developed or acquired to implement product market scheme as a supplement of the theory of competitive advantage by Porter's (1980) established on an organisational business outcome. Basic contributions identified that competition for resources and among organisations are determined by their available resources status which can provide important indications with regards to the organisational capability to obtain advantages in applying product market strategies.

According to Dicksen (1996), the above theory looks at a viewpoint on why organizations supplant or get defeated in the business. Due to the fact that means are invaluable, scarce, distinctive, and cannot be substituted, (Barney, 1991) asserts that for firms to

produce and retain competitive advantages to use available assets and competitive edges for lofty achievement (Collis & Montgomery, 1995; Wernerfelt, 1984).

According to Resource-Based theory, a firm could be adjudged as an assemblage of tangible, human and potentials of a firm (Barney, 1991; Amit & Shoemaker, 1993). The assets of firms that are invaluable, scarce, defectively distinctive and poorly compatible are simple basis of justifiable comparative edge for constant lofty achievement (Barney, 1991). Barney, (1986) noted that invaluable resources must assist an organisation to carrying out its obligations and act in manners that promote increase in trading, reduce price, increase edge, which implies adding monetary value to the organisation. Barney (1991) also stressed that resources are invaluable when they aid a firm in applying strategies that enhance productivity. Resource-Based Theory (RBT) enables employers in organisations to appreciate why potentials can be regarded as a firms' most valuable asset, in other words, understand the way capitals could be utilized to enhance organisational

accomplishment. Resource-Based ideology of the organisation obtains qualities that are interconnected to past experiences, organizational culture and potentials which are essential to the accomplishments of the firm (Campbell & Luchs, 1997; Hamel & Prahalad, 1996).

Organisations need management succession to ensure continuity in leadership and positions in their establishment. Workers are from time to time promoted from one level to another while others exit the workplace via different means such as retirement, sack and death. Management succession planning is a proactive approach to managing talent as it involves identification of high potentials for anticipated future needs and tailored development of these people so that there is a talent pool available to meet organisational demands as they arise (Akani, 2015, p. 156). Schein (1997) as cited in Akani (2015) views succession planning and management as the purposeful and systematic effort made by an organisation to ensure leadership continuity, retain and develop knowledge and intellectual capital for the future and encourage individual worker's growth and development. Rioux & Bernthal (1999) cited in Williams (2018) define succession planning as a systematic process of identifying and developing candidate for leadership or management positions.

Succession planning is carried out as a way of achieving career management for vacant position to be filled up in the workplace. The workplace must put in place policies of either to make or buy the needed worker to fill the created vacuum. Komora, Guyo, & Odhiambo (2015) examine the influence of business goals on the implementation of succession management. This goes to show that management succession is accomplished based on the career goals. Management succession is the process which requires identification of career needs and makes efforts so that the potentials are made available to accomplish those needs.

Armstrong (2009) sees management succession planning as an aspect of career management. Succession planning takes place in an organisation to ensure that they have managers or workers it requires to meet up their business goals. As far as the business of an organisation is concern, situations such as promotion, leaving, transfer, death, retirement may create vacancies that needed to be filled. This makes management succession planning inevitable. It can also be a way to ensure to take up new appointments in the workplace. The information for management succession planning comes from workplace reviews and demand/supply forecast (Armstrong, 2003, p. 602). Akani (2015) examined management succession

planning as it affects corporate survival in Nigeria. The study was carried out in the banking sector. Management development, mentoring, retention efforts were used as dimensions of management succession planning while adaptability and dynamic capability measured corporate survival in the study. The result shows that a good relationship between management succession planning and corporate survival. Onwuka, Ekwulugo, Dibua & Ezeanyim (2017) examine succession management and organisational survival in selected transportation companies in Onitsha, Nigeria. It was reported by the study that inefficiency in succession planning, lack of planning, poor staff mentoring and incompetent employees are major problems these transportation companies face in Onitsha. The result shows that mentoring has a positive relationship with business continuity and it should be encouraged in organisations. Haven discussed on the career management and its dimensions, we shall next review literature on worker engagement and its measures.

### **Organizational Survival**

Organizational survival in this context is described as the ability of the organization to continue in existence (Sheppard, 1993). It is used to denote sustained learning and adaptive characteristics stemming from the organizations tendency for continued adjustment to changes; seen and unforeseen; in the internal and external environment. This description implies an ability or effort by the organization to continue to meet with the demands of the market, its staff, shareholders, investors, host communities, the government and other interested parties. According to Sheppard (1993), survival, he argues translates into an organizations profitability margin, size of market share, organizational size, age and general financial conditions which as he observes all inter-relate to enhance functionality.

Ogunro (2014 as cited in Gabriel, 2105) attributes the survival and success of organizations to various factors; firstly technology, which translates into the organizations research and development activities, technological incentives, and the level of change associated with technology. Secondly, ecological factors which translate into contextual and environmental aspects such as climate issues and weather which affect farm and industrial related businesses.

### **Adaptability**

Adaptability is the degree to which an organization has the ability to alter behavior, structures; and systems in order to survive in the wake of the environmental change (Denison, 2007). Adaptability entails translating the demands of business



environment into action. Organizations as open systems exist in environment that is complex and uncertain. To survive and make profit, organizations need to adapt continuously to the different levels of environmental uncertainty (Amah and Baridam, 2012). Environmental uncertainty represents an important contingency for organization structure and internal behaviors (Daft, 1998). Organizations need to have the right fit between internal structure and the external environment. Adaptability has also come to be considered an important response option worthy of research and assessment, not simply in order to guide the selection of the best mitigation policies, but rather to reduce the vulnerability of groups of people to the impacts of change, and hence minimize the costs associated with the inevitable (Kane and Shogren, 2000; Smit and Pilifosova, 2001). Adaptation is defined as the modification and alterations in the organizations or its components in order to adjust to changes in the environment (Cameron, 1984). Adaptability is defined by Buch (2009) as an organization's capacity to embrace change or be changed to fit an altered environment. Adaptation is not viewed as a one stop process of organizational change but as a continuous process during an organization's life cycle. Davenport (1993) stresses that adaptation is a process of organizational change that should be practiced in the context of a continuity process of human and organization improvement over time (Davenport, 1993). This enables an organization and its people to effectively adapt to environmental change (Guha, Grover, Kettinger, & Teng, 1997).

### **Proactiveness**

Although the concept of proactiveness has been widely mentioned and discussed (see Crant, 2000), the characteristics of proactivity are mainly discussed in the research on proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) and personal initiative (Frees & Fay 2001). In the theme of person–environment relationship, Bateman and Crant (1993) indicated that human beings are not only passively interacting with the environments but can also actively master their environments through selecting situations, reconstructing their perceptions and appraisals, unintentionally evoking other's reactions, and intentionally manipulating their interpersonal environments. Bateman and Crant (1993) further indicated that there are individual differences in enacting proactive behavior.

Proactiveness from an organizational point of view as Parker & Collins (2010) observes, implies organizations being able to act in advance to deal with expected circumstances, rather than waiting for them to occur first. Proactiveness means taking

control and making things happen rather than just adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen (Adam & Susan, 2008). Furthermore, Grant & Ashford (2008) describe proactive behaviour as referring to anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments. Indeed, Bindl and Parker (2010) viewed proactiveness by organizations as that behaviour at the workplace that makes things happen. It involves self-initiated, anticipatory action aimed at changing either the situation or oneself.

### **Dynamic Capability**

Dynamic capability is defined as the organisational ability to create internal change and/or to respond to environmental turbulence. This is done through reconfiguring (creating, extending, and modifying) the organisational resource base (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Penrose, 1959; Zahra, Sapienza and Davidsson, 2006). The dynamic capabilities view of the firm is the evolutionary extension of the resource-based perspective as it explicitly looks at how capabilities evolve and how organisations deal with environmental turbulence (Helfat, Finkelstein, Mitchell, Peteraf, Singh, Teece & Winter, 2007). The term 'dynamic' differentiates one capability (e.g. the operational ability to develop new products) from another form of ability (e.g. the ability to reform the way the organisation develops new products) (Zahra, Sapienza and Davidsson, 2006). Dynamic capabilities do not directly concern the production of a good or the provision of a marketable service and therefore do not directly affect a firm's output (Helfat and Peteraf, 2009). They affect the productive process indirectly by integrating, reconfiguring, gaining, and releasing resources to respond to environmental turbulence or to create internal and external change (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000).

### **Management Succession and Organizational Survival**

The construct management succession is a component of career management and it prepares workers to take up leadership responsibility when it thus appears. The study conducted by Akani in 2015 as cited in the previous section of this research work adopted management development, mentoring and retention efforts as dimensions to management succession can make workers of organisation be engaged with their job. Management succession planning as an aspect of career management relates to worker engagement in the area of worker vigour, worker dedication and worker absorption. Shirom (2003) argued that vigour relates positively with mental and physical health. This shows that engaged workers suffer less from ill health and are always alive for their responsibilities.

Elder (2019) opined that not only does succession management offer workers a process of identity and develop top performers for future internal positions, but it can impact engagement by showing workers they are valued members of the organisation. A software Advice study as cited by Elder (2019) found that 62% of workers would be more significantly engaged at work if their employer instituted a succession plan. El Badawy, Alaadin & Hussein (2016) examine the missing link between succession planning, job engagement and job satisfaction. The result found a positive correlation between succession planning and job engagement and satisfaction independently. They further assert that succession planning is critical for organisational longevity and can be a key driver of engagement, as workers who have access to career development opportunities will be more engaged and less likely to leave the organisation. Zhu & Manjarrez (2017) asserted that transparent succession planning leads to increased workers engagement, positively influencing workers

behaviour. The review reveals that survey carried out by an employee engagement firm shows that a lack of transparency and information to do the job is the third highest factor in decreased worker productivity.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured, self-administered questionnaire. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was 815 non-academic staff in the 4 Public Universities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. A sample of 268 respondents was calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table 1 Correlations Matrix between Management Succession and Adaptability**

			Management Succession	Adaptability
Spearman's rho	Management Succession	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.832**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	93	93
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.832**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	93	93

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between management succession and adaptability of public universities in Bayelsa State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between management succession and adaptability was shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficient of 0.832 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a very strong positive correlation between the variables. The test of significance shows that this relationship is significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.01$ . Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship management succession and adaptability of public universities in Bayelsa State.

**Table 2: Correlations matrix between Management Succession and Proactiveness**

			Management Succession	Proactiveness
Spearman's rho	Management Succession	Correlation Coefficient	1.000z	.843**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	93	93
	Proactiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.843**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	93	93

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between management succession and proactiveness of public universities in Bayelsa State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between management succession and proactiveness was shown in Table 2. The correlation coefficient of 0.843 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a very strong positive correlation between the variables. The test of significance shows that this relationship is significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.01$ . Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a relationship between management succession and proactiveness of public universities in Bayelsa State.

**Table 3: Correlations Matrix between Management Succession and Dynamics Capability**

			Management Succession	Dynamics Capability
Spearman's rho	Management Succession	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.339**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	93	93
	Dynamics Capability	Correlation Coefficient	.339**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	93	93

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between management succession and dynamic capability of public universities in Bayelsa State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between working condition and students' performance was shown in Table 3. The correlation coefficient of 0.339 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a weak positive correlation between the variables. The test of significance shows that this relationship is significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.01$ . Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between management succession and dynamic capability of public universities in Bayelsa State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results of data analysis revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between management succession and organizational survival. The finding in this study agrees Baskin (2012) viewed that succession management plan can make workers engaged in the sense that workers of organisation will be dedicated to their assigned responsibility. The reason is the benefit the worker stands to benefit from the succession plan will make him/her dedicated. Elder (2019) established that fact that the relationship breeds an increased productivity because dedicated workers' productivity rises owing to the growing level of dedication to the job. Studies carried out by researchers showed that organisation that exposes their succession management plans to their worker will to a large extent boost level engagement in the area of worker dedication in research like (El Badawy, Alaadin & Hussein, 2016; Simon 2011 and Zhu & Manjarez, 2017 and Elder, 2019).

Dalton, Daily, Certo, and Roengpitya (2003) examined the relationship between CEO succession and firm performance in a sample of publicly traded firms. Their findings revealed that carefully planned CEO successions were associated with improved financial performance, highlighting the importance of strategic leadership transitions for organizational success. The study by Fransen, Kintana, and Carmona (2015) investigated management succession in family

firms and found that a well-planned and properly executed succession process was associated with higher firm survival rates. Their research emphasized the need for careful planning and consideration of family dynamics in succession processes to ensure organizational continuity.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that management succession positively influences the survival of Public Universities in Bayelsa State. This implies that effective management succession planning is crucial for ensuring the smooth continuity of leadership and the preservation of institutional stability. When leadership transitions are well-managed and carefully executed, it can lead to improved governance, strategic decision-making, and overall organizational performance.

Based on the findings the study recommends that:

1. Public universities in Bayelsa State should establish a well-defined succession planning strategy that identifies potential successors, assesses their skills and competencies, and provides appropriate training and development opportunities. This strategy should also outline a clear process for smooth leadership transitions, ensuring minimal disruption to the institution's operations.



2. Public universities should cultivate a culture that encourages innovation, forward thinking, and proactive approaches to challenges. This can be achieved by promoting a supportive environment where employees feel empowered to suggest and implement new ideas, and where risk-taking and experimentation are encouraged.
3. Public universities should establish a strategic succession planning process that aligns with the institution's goals and objectives. This includes identifying key positions that are critical for the university's dynamic capabilities and ensuring that suitable successors are identified and prepared to take on these roles.

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